

VI.—Note on the American Crows of the Subgenus *Xanthura*.

By P. L. SCLATER.

IN a communication on this subject read before the Royal Academy of Sciences of Belgium in 1874* by M. Dubois, four "local varieties" are recognized of *Cyanocorax* (*Xanthura*) *incas* of authors, which M. Dubois distinguishes as follows from the typical form:—

α. *cyanodorsalis*: cervice cæruleo-violacea, dorso cæruleo: ex Nov. Granad. centr. et merid.

β. *cyanocapilla*: pileo cyaneo; vitta pilei inter oculos candida: ex Nov. Granad. bor. et Am. centr. ad Guatemalam.

γ. *cæruleo-cephala*: pileo toto cyaneo, sine vitta alba; abdomine flavissimo: ex Venezuela.

δ. *luxuosa*: præc. sim. sed corp. inf. viridi-luteo: ex Mexico et Texas.

Having lately had occasion to reexamine the series of specimens of this group in my own collection and in that of Messrs. Salvin and Godman (in all twenty-two in number), I have a few remarks to offer upon the synonymy and distribution of these birds, which have not been quite correctly given either by M. Dubois or by Mr. Sharpe, who has followed M. Dubois in treating of the genus.

(1) Mr. Sharpe, in his Catalogue (vol. iii. p. 128 *et seqq.*), reduces M. Dubois's five forms to four species by uniting var. α. *cyanodorsalis* of Dubois with the typical *incas*. But here M. Dubois is certainly right. Mr. Sharpe cannot have seen the Bogota bird, or he would never have reunited it with the typical *C. incas*.

(2) M. Dubois and Mr. Sharpe both refer the synonym "*Cyanocorax cyanocapillus*, Cab. in Tsch. Faun. Per. Aves, p. 233," to the *Guatemalan* form. But on referring to the original work it will be found that this name is based primarily on several specimens from Xalapa, Mexico, in the Berlin Museum, with which, it is stated, one example from La Guayra (*i. e.* Venezuela) nearly agrees, except in its yellow

* "Remarques morphologiques sur les espèces du sous-genre *Xanthoura*. Par M. Dubois," Bull. Ac. Belg. 2^e sér. xxxviii. p. 488.

under surface. Subsequently, in the 'Museum Heineanum' (i. p. 223), Dr. Cabanis proposed to shift his name onto the Venezuelan bird, *i. e.* *Xanthura cæruleocephala* (Dubois), and to leave the Mexican bird as *X. luxuosa*. But it is in any case erroneous to apply the term *cyaneocapilla* to the Guatemalan form; and "*cyaneocapilla*, Cab.," is, in strictness, merely a synonym of "*luxuosa*, Lesson."

(3) M. Dubois and Mr. Sharpe both refer "*Xanthura guatemalensis*, Bp. Consp. i. 380," to the Guatemalan form, as would be natural enough, judging from the name only. But on looking to Bonaparte's characters, "*pileo cyaneo; abdomine flavissimo*," it will be seen at once that they by no means fit the Guatemalan bird. The fact is, I believe, that this diagnosis was founded on Venezuelan skins (*i. e.* on *Xanthura cæruleocephala*) which it does apply to exactly; for I have a skin in my collection, received from Verreaux, which, when I bought it, was marked "*Xanthura guatemalensis*, Bp.," in Bonaparte's own writing*. In this, as in many other cases, Prince Bonaparte probably put down "Mus. Lugd. et Brux." from recollection, or from imperfect notes, and added the diagnosis from another specimen.

But although I have thus destroyed both the names hitherto applied to the Guatemalan bird, I have no intention of proposing another for it, as I consider it to be much too close to the Mexican *X. luxuosa* to require any different specific name. According to my ideas the four separable forms of *Xanthura* should stand as follows, beginning from the north:—

1. *X. luxuosa* (Less.), from Texas, Mexico, Guatemala, and Honduras. (= *X. luxuosa* et *X. cyaneocapilla*, Sharpe.) Head blue, with a narrow white postfrontal band; abdomen yellowish green, in southern specimens more yellow.

2. *X. cæruleocephala* (Dubois), from Venezuela. Head blue, with a very narrow postfrontal band (almost obsolete in some skins†); abdomen bright yellow.

* In my American Catalogue (p. 144) this skin was wrongly entered as "*Cyanocorax incas a*, Ecuador," the true *C. incas* not being then represented in my collection.

† Cf. Sharpe, *l. c.* p. 131. In a skin from Caripé (*Goering*), Mus. S.-G., the white band is of this character.

3. *X. cyanodorsalis* (Dubois), from Central Columbia (*X. incas*, part., Sharpe). White postfrontal band extended over vertex; nape blue; back washed with blue; abdomen pale yellow.

4. *X. incas* (Bodd.), from Western Columbia, Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia. Whole nape and top of head white, slightly washed on the nape with bluish in some specimens; back green; abdomen yellow.

Of this last species I have examples before me from Antioquia (*Salmon*); Bucaramanga, Magdalena valley (*Wyatt*); Maraviña, Ecuador (*Buckley*); Peru; and Yungas, Bolivia (*Buckley*).

In my opinion these four forms, of which only the more salient characters are above given, are entitled to specific rank. The Venezuelan form comes nearest to the northern bird, as is the case in other groups with similar distribution. In the same way *Catharus aurantiirostris* of Venezuela is more like *C. melpomene* of Mexico and Central America than any of the Columbian forms of the same genus.

VII.—On recent Additions to our Knowledge of the Avifauna of the Sandwich Islands. By P. L. SCLATER.

(Plate II.)

SOME time ago I contributed to this Journal* a summary of what was then known of the avifauna of the Sandwich Islands, based mainly upon an article upon the subject by Mr. Dole, which had appeared in the 'Proceedings' of the Boston Society of Natural History a short time before. From its remoteness from all other land, and from the known peculiarities of its fauna, the Sandwich-Island archipelago presents features of no ordinary interest; and it is much to be desired that a complete investigation of its native fauna and flora should be made before they are destroyed by civilization or contaminated by the intrusion of wandering forms of general distribution. Looking to the facility of access to the Sand-

* Ibis, 1871, p. 356.